

A good year for those birds that survived the winter!

Support for the scheme continues to grow and so the total number of boxes was increased to 164 in Foxglove with the addition of some specialist boxes for Barn Owl and Redstart and extended to include large boxes located on the Catterick Training Area.

The number of pairs of both Blue and Great Tits was significantly lower than in 2008, but the productivity for both the Blue and Great Tits was a great improvement on recent years. 2010 saw the number of Coal Tits using the boxes maintained at 4 pairs.

In the large boxes on the reserve we were very fortunate to have 3 pairs of Tawny Owls raise a total of 5 chicks. The large boxes on the Training area attracted a Kestrel, Tawny Owl and Jackdaw.

Looking ahead, we will be checking the smaller boxes and carrying out necessary maintenance in March 2011. If you want to come and see your box in action we are arranging visits again in May next year.

Please contact the Reserve Managers or look on the website for more details.

The ringing team goes from strength to strength! We have welcomed several new younger members this year but also had the sad news that Jenny has had to hang up her pliers. CES days will never be quite the same again!

A team visited Cape Wrath at the end of June to assist with seabird monitoring and came back with some mixed news. Visits to the sea cliffs at Clo Mohr revealed many Guillemot and Razorbill chicks were dying, clearly food was an issue again after the improvements noted last year. We managed to do some work on the open moorland of the Training Area where we were able to locate nests of the Arctic Skua at one of their few mainland breeding sites. At one nest we were able to ring the chicks and this was a first for many of the team. We also were able to catch and ring chicks of Red-throated Diver for the second year running.

	2008		2009		2010	
SPECIES	Nests	Ringed	Nests	Ringed	Nests	Ringed
Great Tit	31	84	20	97	19	113
Blue Tit	19	89	14	77	14	93
Coal Tit	1	7	5	14	4	33
Tawny Owl	1	2	1	2	3	5
TOTAL	62	193	53	190	48	244



For those that want to read more about the activities of the ringing team, we have just published the 2008 Report and copies are available for browsing in the Ringing Room. Like painting the Forth Road Bridge we are now starting work on the 2009 summary!

We have just finished our twelfth and final CES session for this year and are starting to analyse the data. We finished the year with record catches on our last 3 sessions which tends to suggest that this has been a good breeding season for many species, but we will know more when the numbers are crunched. We have now completed 18 years work on CES and by so doing both continued to meet one of our key objectives as a Local Nature Reserve and highlighted again how important Foxglove is at a national level as a premier site for collecting data on productivity, longevity and survival of birds in the UK.

Tom Dewdney



Undergrowth

Issue No 24 Summer 2010

The Newsletter of Foxglove Covert Local Nature Reserve

Editorial Comment

High Level Stewardship (HLS) Scheme and Foxglove

Welcome to the 24th edition of Undergrowth. 2010 has been a summer of change, Ray has decided to hand over the reigns of Undergrowth and Tania Deacon has volunteered to take on the onerous task, with assistance from myself. Thanks to Ray for all he has done and good luck to Tania.

Tony wrote last time about the new HLS Agreement and already we can see the major improvements that have resulted and this is just the start of phase 1. You can read more in the item below.

We have been blessed with some really good weather this summer and the flora and fauna have flourished. Read more about some of our monitoring activities and learn more about what still needs to be done.

Despite the HLS Agreement, raising funds remains a key task for the management group and we are looking at how we can ensure an adequate cash flow in these difficult times. Bob is looking for volunteers and ideas, please feel free to contribute.

Tom Dewdney

No one who has visited the reserve over the summer months will have failed to notice the improvements that are taking place. In the following notes we would like to summarise what is happening and alert readers to some of the further changes that they can look out for before the end of the year.

One of the key drivers for the HLS project is to make the wide diversity of wildlife and habitats that we have created in Foxglove available for study and enjoyment by as many people as possible of all ages and capabilities. Working through the key projects in turn:

Lake extension - Initial survey work has started on the project to double the surface area of the lake and to re-routing the adjacent pathways to reduce the level of disturbance to the wildlife. This will include a new 25m bridge over the narrow end of the lake.

A Disabled Hide has been created underneath the Tower Hide on the lake and this will be linked by a new, specially designed bridge, and associated footpaths to the existing track along the western shore of the lake.

An Outdoor Classroom is to be built in the woodland on the approach to the moorland. This facility will provide a new covered teaching area together with an access platform adjacent to the stream.

CCTV - We plan to install remote cameras on the two main hides and project the images back to a new split screen TV in the main reception area of the Field Centre. Other channels will be available to link to nest box cameras and input our own promotional materials.

Educational Tools - We have extended the reference library, have purchased a number of educational aides including microscopes and will soon take delivery of an underwater camera and better projection facilities within the Field Centre.

Information - You will no doubt have noticed the new information shelter at the entrance to the reserve. This will be equipped with key information for visitors arriving at Foxglove. Information boards and way markers have been added at key points to improve interpretational opportunities. A new signage system will be installed once all the changes have been made.

Web Site - The existing web site is to be developed in a way that allows local updating and greatly extends the interaction available with the on-line public.

In addition to these specific capital items, our HLS Agreement is providing funding to allow us to carry out agreed management activities designed to improve the overall environment of the reserve.

Tom Dewdney

Mothing Update

We have had a mixed mothing year so far, from no moths at all in the trap to adding nine new entries to our reserve species list!

As we only set the trap once a week we start trapping as the weather begins to warm up in spring. This year our first session was 10th March and when we opened the trap there were only three moths within! As one of them was an Oak Beauty, which we don't see very often, this didn't seem so bad. However, as the weeks went on, the catch was disappointingly poor as we were getting, on average, 6 to 8 species each week. The worst day was 26th May. When Elizabeth and I opened the trap we couldn't believe that there were NO MOTHS AT ALL. In May! We looked around the building, under the benches, everywhere we could think, but there was not a moth to be found.



Blackneck Moth

When the next week we only had 4 moths we even considered cancelling our yearly trapping with Charlie Fletcher. Luckily we went ahead and, although the total numbers were lower than the previous year, we had a good selection of species, 85 in total, including 7 new site records. The most spectacular of these were the Ruby Tiger, Green Silver-lines and Whitepinion Spotted.

Since then the trapping has been very good. The highest number of species trapped was on 30th June, when 44 species were caught. The highlight of the mothing year so far has been the addition to our list of 2 new moths from the trapping on the 7th July. The Scallop Shell moth and Blackneck moth were caught on the same day. The Blackneck caused considerable interest as it was not only the first for Foxglove, but the first for VC65 (our recording area) as well!

Our moth trapping year continues until November and anyone who would like to come along and see the trap opened or be involved in the identification, can come on a Wednesday morning and join in. We would be pleased to see you.

Marion Hannaford

Improved disabled access



Access for the Disabled has been improved by replacing the boardwalks and improving access paths on the main trails.

Chairman's Report from deepest darkest Africa

There are few pleasures in spending from 0400 hrs to midnight in the care of airport staff and airlines, but arriving in Entebbe makes it worthwhile. I am sitting on a park bench on the shores of Lake Victoria in the National Botanical Gardens of Uganda, waiting for my next flight back to Goma, Congo, tomorrow. And it is a real treat.

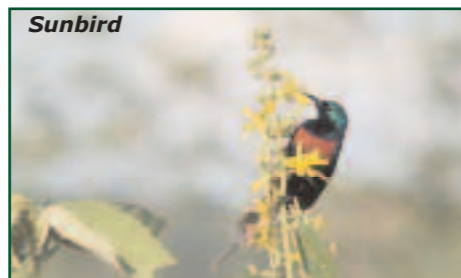
The Gardens are 110 years old and were the brainchild of one of those typical British pioneers who found himself stuck in Uganda but had a passion for trees. As the first curator of what became one



Woodland Kingfisher

in the trees. I am scouring the canopy now! There is however one disappointment: I have seen simply loads of Hamerkops on the Lake's Edge and until now, I had thought I was remarkably clever for spotting just one up on lake Edward!

My time back in England was of course hectic, but I managed to visit Foxglove three or four times, and as ever was completely taken aback by the developments that have taken place. Clearly everyone has been very busy, and it was good to see at first hand what I have read about in the Blog. The major projects are clear for all to see - who can miss the new hide?! It is apparent that the wardens and volunteers have been very busy too, keeping the place spic-and-span and looking after all the visitors. I have been particularly pleased to hear about the successes of the Eco Club, which seems to be going from strength to strength. I think that the Botanical Gardens could do with the support Foxglove gets from its friends!



Sunbird

The Management Group also had a chance to meet. Against the economic backdrop it was a slightly downbeat gathering, but there was still good news to discuss, much of which is evident to visitors to Foxglove and followers of the Blog, but it was a particular pleasure to welcome Bob Longridge and John Ginnever to the management Group, both of whom bring a range of experience that will be most useful to Foxglove.

That's all from Entebbe. Best Wishes,

Guy Deacon

of the most important arboretums in Sub Sahara Africa, he has a lot to be proud of. Most of the land between Kampala and Entebbe is now farmland or has been built on, but the gardens - set up for research - have preserved a small piece of original forest and have collected a wide range of plants and trees from the entire region. It is just a stone's throw from the airport, and whilst it was used to film the Tarzan films in its hey-day, now it is a bit tired, and resembles a private park/garden with fine views of the lake and little else. But above all it is peaceful and if you are interested in trees and birds, it is a place not to be missed.

Actually, I estimate it to be the same size as Foxglove, but it is much more open. And the flora and fauna are a bit different! Here weavers are probably the commonest birds, (not including the rather dull bulbuls) and the woodland kingfishers are far more common - and noisy - than ours too. Crowned Hornbills are easy to spot and the egrets and other assorted waders are very used to visitors too. Last time I was here I glimpsed a splendid Great Blue Turacao

Eco Club - 31st July

We went on a bug safari...

Dr Roger Key and his wife Rosie arrived early to unload their car which was full of pooters and nets, tubs and sticks. When we were all sorted and instructions given on how to use the pooters and sweep nets, the intrepid hunters (children and adults) set off towards the heathland.

The eagle-eyed children soon had nets full of many different organisms. A crab spider that can walk like a crab; a sawfly caterpillar who has "legs" all the way



along its body; a green grasshopper who should be brown; froghoppers who hopped; and the one I loved best was Crepidodera transversa, a thistle flea beetle. Roger and Rosie identified the organisms caught and had a tale and information to tell about many of them which was fascinating to listen to.

We eventually returned to the Activity Room and pockets were unloaded of specimen tubes full of creatures to be finally identified before release.

We all had a thoroughly enjoyable morning. Our grateful thanks go to Roger and Rosie who made the morning so special. Thanks also to Sophie, Ann, Sue and Tony who helped.

Elizabeth Dickinson



Foxglove Summer BBQ

The friends and volunteers that attended this year's barbeque were treated to an exceptional array of culinary delights prepared and cooked by Namik and Damon.



The weather was kind, the food fantastic with great humour and company to boot. hope that everyone enjoyed the day as much as my family and I did.

Paul Welsh

Lesley Garbutt

Bedale Coffee Morning

I volunteered to help with the Coffee Morning at Bedale on Saturday, 10th July in aid of FGC.

On Saturday morning I met Tony and a small group of volunteers. Within a short space of time we were ready for business.

I joined volunteers Lillian and Tony selling the generous amount of donated homemade cakes, etc, and serving the drinks. Things ran like clockwork. Everyone in the kitchen and hall was kept busy. We also had a small team outside to invite people in.

The total raised was £205.40. I came away pleased that I had helped FGC, and also made new friends. I would certainly advise anyone with a few hours to spare to volunteer when help is needed. It's fun and for a very good cause.

edges of the main path leading from the Centre. We learned that Coltsfoot was once put in shoes to keep the feet warm, and even smoked!

It was absolutely fascinating to hear about the folklore connected to the names and uses of many of the flowers we encountered. For instance, to distinguish between sedges, rushes and grasses, we learnt the following rhyme:

*Sedges have edges,
Rushes are round
And grasses are hollow
right down to the ground.*

We found out how to distinguish the Germander Speedwell, which has a line of white hairs only on two opposite sides of the stem, and Marion was eager to show us which plants were not only edible but tasty! These included citrusy flavoured Wood Sorrel, the Pignut, and Ramsons. For example, for garlic lovers, the flower buds of Ramsons or Wild Garlic make a delicious treat when stir fried.

Marion again had "done us proud". A big "Thank you" goes out to Marion on behalf of myself and the other members of the group.

Sue Harper

Foxglove Covert LNR Species List

A list of species found on the reserve has been kept since 1992, when the reserve first came into being.

Over the years experts in various fields have carried out surveys and forays and reported their findings. These surveys have contributed greatly to the number of species recorded.



Wasp beetle

During the first few months of 2010 the number of species was climbing towards 2000 and with a flurry of new species in June and July, we reached that number. However we did not stop there and a few more species have been added!

We know that there are many more species out there waiting for us to find, photograph and record - a tiny fungus was recently noticed, along with a liverwort, both as yet unidentified.

Elizabeth Dickinson

Foxglove Wild Flower Walk - 12th June

Saturday 12th June, the day of the Foxglove Wild Flower walk, proved to be a fine, warm day, and much more settled than July! Marion led the walk and a good sized group, along with 'assorted' dogs, made their way through the reserve. Marion's Wild Flower walks are becoming 'legend' now, and today's event did not disappoint in any way.

As Marion led us through a variety of habitats which included pond areas, woodland, heathland, river banks and wet meadows I counted in excess of 88 different wild flowers. They ranged from the humble and instantly recognisable Daisy, with the prettier Latin name of Bellis Perennis, to the rare Adderstongue, found on the wet meadows area. This small and relatively inconspicuous atypical fern looks similar to a miniature Arum.

The range of habitats in Foxglove Covert provides ideal conditions for a range of Orchids which include the Common Spotted and Northern Marsh Orchids, and these beautiful flowers were in abundance to everyone's delight.

We observed Herb Robert, part of the Geranium family and named after Duke Robert of Normandy, also Tormentil, Black Medick, and Silverweed along the

Friends Co-ordinator

Following the departure of Ray Harper I have agreed to undertake the duties of Friends Co-ordinator.

Firstly we must thank Ray for the time he has given the Trust and wish him well.

I am currently in the process of catching up with the mechanics of the Friends' database, subscription collection (and reminders) and various other associated tasks such as managing the 100 Club. I hope those whose membership has recently been renewed automatically will not mind if there is a slight delay in sending a letter to you.

If there is any aspect of the Friends organisation which you think could be improved please let me know. I can be reached on robert.longridge@bopenworld.com or by mail at Fairacres, Hudswell Lane, Richmond DL11 6BD. For instance, do you as a Friend have sufficient opportunity to meet other Friends in your local area? I know that some Friends live a long way from Foxglove, but most are within a 20 mile radius. Would you like a "local" meeting to be organised from time to time, perhaps to help plan a fundraising programme? I look forward to hearing from you with your ideas.

Bob Longridge